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AUTHOR Morris, Pamela; Jones, Stephanie; Smith, Jared

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ABSTRACT

Although it is commonly assumed that children living in public housing are at greater risk of experiencing academic and behavioral problems than other low-income children, there is little research available documenting the circumstances and experiences of these children and examining whether differences in outcomes between them and their non-public housing counterparts are associated with characteristics of the developments in which they live. This study used data on nearly 1,500 children--ages 6 to 17 years--from 850 public housing families. Data were collected prior to the implementation of the Jobs-Plus demonstration program at seven sites to examine the well-being of children living in public housing developments and explore whether characteristics of their parents and the communities are associated with differences in the children's outcomes. Among the key findings of the study are that on some, but not all, measures of school and behavioral outcomes, a substantial proportion of public housing children exhibited negative outcomes. Older children and boys were at greater risk than younger children and girls. When compared with children receiving welfare in selected states, children in the Jobs-Plus developments were at slightly greater risk of experiencing negative school and behavioral outcomes. Few associations were found between measures of the Jobs-Plus children's well-being and their parents' employment or welfare status. Parents' mental health and experience with domestic abuse were associated with negative aspects of children's schooling and behavior. Contextual factors of the housing development, such as proportion of parents who had jobs, were not related to children's outcomes. (Contains 27 references.) (KB)

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Children in Public Housing Developments

An Examination of the Children at the Beginning of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration

Pamela Morris and Stephanie Jones

with

Jared Smith

PS 031010

MDRC

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Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation

December 2002

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Overview

Children who live in public housing are commonly thought to be at greater risk of experiencing academic and behavioral problems than other low-income children, but few studies have systematically attempted to document the circumstances and experiences of these children and to understand whether differences in outcomes between them and their non-public housing counterparts are associated with characteristics of the developments in which they live. This dearth of information makes it difficult to design effective policies to address the difficulties faced by this high-risk group.

This paper begins to fill the information gap by capitalizing on the unique opportunity provided by the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families, an ambitious research demonstration project that aims to improve residents' employment status. Using data on nearly 1,500 children of public housing residents collected before the implementation of Jobs-Plus, the paper examines the well-being of children living in public housing developments and explores whether characteristics of their parents and the communities are associated with differences in the children's outcomes.

Key Findings

- On some, but not all, measures of school and behavioral outcomes, a substantial proportion of children living in public housing exhibited negative outcomes. As expected, older children and boys were at greater risk than younger children and girls.
- When compared with data on other children receiving welfare in selected states, children in the Jobs-Plus developments were shown to be at only slightly greater risk of experiencing negative school and behavioral outcomes.
- Few associations were found between measures of the Jobs-Plus children's well-being and their parents' employment or welfare status.
- Parents' mental health and experience with domestic abuse were associated with negative aspects of children's schooling and behavior. However, contextual factors of the housing developments, such as the proportion of parents who had jobs, were not related to children's outcomes.

The data reported here provide a first look at the children in the Jobs-Plus demonstration communities. Further examination of the effects of the Jobs-Plus demonstration on child and adolescent development is planned as part of the evaluation project. This work will provide crucial information to our understanding of how neighborhood change, in combination with changes occurring within individual families, may affect the well-being of children in public housing.

Acknowledgments

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Finally, we thank the residents of the public housing developments who participated in the Jobs-Plus survey and contributed so generously to enhancing our knowledge.

The Authors

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Introduction

Parents in public housing may be among the most disadvantaged of low-income families, and thus their children may face considerable risks to their well-being. While low-income children have been found to face increased risk of poor cognitive and social development, these risks are most pronounced among children living in deep and persistent poverty — a condition that characterizes many families living in public housing.[1] Moreover, such factors as depression and domestic violence, which are likely to be most prevalent among the most disadvantaged parents, are also associated with increased problems for children.[2] At the same time, public housing as a benefit to low-income families may increase their disposable income and provide a measure of housing stability. Both these factors may result in slightly more protection from the negative consequences of poverty for children whose families live in public housing than for average low-income children.

Unfortunately, research on children in public housing has been limited, leaving much that is unknown about their characteristics and circumstances. While case studies have pointed to the violence and poverty experienced by children in the most difficult of these developments[3] — and to the deleterious consequences on children's outcomes — few studies have systematically attempted to portray children in public housing developments and to understand whether the characteristics of developments are associated with differences in children's outcomes. This paper conducts such an analysis by capitalizing on the unique opportunity provided by a demonstration study of almost 1,500 children of public housing residents: the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families ("Jobs-Plus" for short).

Jobs-Plus is a place-based initiative designed to increase the self-sufficiency of public housing residents by increasing their employment. It encourages this through three components: (1) employment-related activities and services, (2) financial incentives to "make work pay," and (3) community supports for work. The demonstration program — being evaluated by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) — uses a "saturation-level approach" in which every resident in the housing development is eligible to receive services. The hope is that Jobs-Plus will transform housing developments into places where a majority of the residents work. Initially the demonstration operated in 20 developments (8 Jobs-Plus sites and 12 comparison sites) across 7 cities. In this study, data that were collected *before* the implementation of Jobs-Plus are used to examine the well-being of children living in public housing developments and to explore whether the characteristics of their parents and of the housing development are

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[1] Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov, 1994; Bolger, Patterson, Thompson, and Kupersmidt, 1995.
[2] Danziger, Kalil, and Anderson, 2000; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999; Lennon, Blome, and English, 2001.
[3] Kotlowitz, 1991.

associated with differences in the children's outcomes. The data thus draw a picture of children living in public housing and provide a unique opportunity to understand how the characteristics of families and neighborhoods may differentiate among them. In so doing, the data generate some more informed hypotheses about how a neighborhood initiative like Jobs-Plus might affect children's well-being.

Research Questions

This paper addresses the following research questions:

- *How are children in the Jobs-Plus developments faring in terms of school and behavioral outcomes?* The data collected at the beginning of the Jobs-Plus demonstration study can contribute to a better understanding of this particularly high-risk group of children.

- *How does the subset of children who live in families receiving welfare in the Jobs-Plus developments compare with children in samples of welfare families in other studies (who may or may not be living in public housing)?* On a limited set of measures, the children on welfare in this study can be compared with children in other studies. Are the Jobs-Plus children similar to — or significantly more at risk or less at risk than — children in the other samples?

- *To what extent do children's outcomes differ depending on whether or not their parents are employed and whether or not their parents are receiving welfare?* Understanding how parents' welfare and employment status are related to children's well-being may help build hypotheses about how the changes that are brought about by initiatives like Jobs-Plus are likely to impact children's well-being through changes in parents' economic outcomes — the primary goals of Jobs-Plus.

- *To what extent are children's outcomes related to characteristics of the Jobs-Plus housing developments?* Because Jobs-Plus is likely to affect children by influencing both the economic characteristics of their parents and the quality of their neighborhoods (developments), understanding how children's outcomes are related to various characteristics of the housing developments (for example, economic versus social capital) may help inform hypotheses about how initiatives like Jobs-Plus might affect children. Furthermore, how do these relationships compare with the relationships observed between parents' characteristics and measures of children's well-being?

Findings in Brief

The analyses find that:

- On some, but not all, measures of school and behavioral outcomes, this group of children living in public housing is at high risk of negative outcomes. As expected, older children and boys were found to face greater risks to their well-being than younger children and girls.
- When compared with other children receiving welfare, children in the Jobs-Plus developments are at most at only slightly greater risk with regard to school and behavioral outcomes.
- For children living in the Jobs Plus developments, few associations were found between measures of children's well-being and parents' employment or welfare status.
- While there were few effects of parents' employment status, parents' mental health and experience with domestic abuse were associated with negative aspects of children's schooling and behavior. At the same time, contextual factors of the housing developments themselves were not related to children's outcomes.

Background Research

Children living in public housing may face considerable risks to their social and cognitive development. Not only is poverty associated with increased difficulties for children,[4] but parental characteristics associated with poverty may also negatively affect children's development. For example, mental health difficulties are among the most prevalent factors that contribute to unemployment among parents,[5] and maternal depression places children (particularly very young children) at risk for difficulties in emotional development, because of unresponsive parenting.[6] Domestic violence appears to put children at risk of such behavioral problems as internalizing (being withdrawn) and externalizing (acting out) as well as problems with academic functioning.[7]

Public housing, however, is intended to benefit low-income families, and so a family in public housing may actually be *better* off than a family with similar characteristics but without this public benefit. Subsidized housing not only allows parents to have more disposable income

[4]Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997.
[5]Danziger, Kalil, and Anderson, 2000; Lennon, Blome, and English, 2001.
[6]Lennon, Blome, and English, 2001.
[7]Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999.

that could be spent on children but also may provide a measure of residential stability that could enhance children's development.[8] In fact, research that has tried to sort out the extent to which the risks for children arise from the characteristics of families who live in public housing or from the housing conditions themselves has found that — after family characteristics are equalized across public housing residents and nonresidents — children actually do better with regard to their long-term self-sufficiency in public housing, exactly because of its benefits.[9]

This paper describes a set of children living in public housing developments at the start of the Jobs Plus demonstration study. Because the data were collected at the start of the study, they cannot be used to evaluate the effects of the Jobs-Plus program. They can, however, give us a better picture of the characteristics and circumstances of children living in public housing.

Programs like Jobs-Plus may affect children through two distinct pathways. First, because such programs are targeted at parents' economic outcomes, they may affect children by increasing parents' self-sufficiency. For example, children may be positively affected by the regularity of routines, the increased maternal self-esteem, and the increased income that may come as parents move from welfare to employment. On the other hand, children may be negatively affected by a program like Jobs-Plus if parents' employment reduces the amount of time that they have to monitor their children or increases parents' stress as they attempt to manage the dual roles of work and parenting. This is the pathway by which welfare policies have been hypothesized to affect children.[10]

Several recent experimental evaluations can help explain how Jobs-Plus may affect children through this pathway.[11] The findings suggest that there are few effects on children in programs with mandatory services that increase parents' employment but not their income.[12] However, programs that increase both employment and income (by supplementing earnings) seem to have more consistent positive effects on children, at least in the middle-childhood age range.[13] Therefore, the effects of programs like Jobs-Plus on younger children will be limited if the program increases parents' employment but not their income. There is some suggestion, however, that older children have difficulties in their school progress when parents engage in greater levels of employment,[14] suggesting that programs like Jobs-Plus may present potential difficulties for adolescents.

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[8]Newman and Harkness, 2002.
[9]Newman and Harkness, 2002.
[10]Morris et al., 2001.
[11]For a review and comparison, see Morris et al. (2001).
[12]Hamilton, 2000; McGroder, Zaslow, Moore, and LeMenestrel, 2000.
[13]Bos et al., 1999; Huston et al., 2001; Gennetian and Miller, 2000; Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000.
[14]Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000; Gennetian et al., 2002.

One feature that makes initiatives like Jobs-Plus unique relative to other employment and welfare-to-work policies, however, is that they are place-based initiatives. As such, they may affect children not only by changing parental behavior but also by changing the communities (the housing developments) in which children live. This is the second pathway by which programs like Jobs-Plus may affect children's well-being. Older children, particularly, may be as much influenced by the behavior of the adults in their neighborhood as they are by their own parents' behavior. For example, as the employment rate in the development increases, adolescents may be encouraged by the increased number of positive role models present or by the safety and community cohesion that might result when more adults in the development are working. Prior nonexperimental research has suggested that neighborhood characteristics can influence children's development, net of family characteristics.[15] More recent experimental research has bolstered these conclusions by finding that encouraging low-income families to move to lower-poverty neighborhoods appears to result in benefits to children.[16] However, many researchers have characterized neighborhood effects as being relatively small and more distal to children's outcomes than family factors, in that most neighborhood influences tend to be indirect, affecting children through changes in families. In public housing developments, then, "neighborhood" effects may be limited to those that occur within the development, since research suggests that the context for children's activities is the development rather than the surrounding neighborhood.[17]

The data collected at the start of the Jobs-Plus demonstration are used here to build more informed hypotheses about how an initiative like Jobs Plus may affect children. While the data cannot tell definitively what the effects of Jobs-Plus will be, they can inform our understanding of the characteristics of parents and neighborhoods that are associated with differences in outcomes for children, within a limited range of family and neighborhood characteristics. Whether changing those characteristics as part of the demonstration will result in changes for children is a question that will have to await the final evaluation of Jobs-Plus.

Data and Methods

The survey utilized in this analysis was administered to all working-age, nondisabled heads of household in each of the Jobs-Plus housing developments in 1998, prior to implementation of the program. At start-up, Jobs-Plus consisted of eight developments across seven cities: Gilmor Homes in Baltimore, Maryland; Harriet Tubman Homes in Chattanooga, Tennessee; Woodhill Homes Estates in Cleveland, Ohio; DeSoto Bass Courts in Dayton, Ohio; Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes, both in Los Angeles, California; Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul,

[15]Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, and Aber, 1997.
[16]Ludwig, Duncan, and Hirshfield, 2001.
[17]Shlay and Holupka, 1991.

Minnesota; and Rainier Vista in Seattle, Washington.[18] While most depictions of public housing are of large, high-rise towers arrayed in huge developments, the eight developments participating in Jobs-Plus are varied in construction and composition. In fact, only one (Mt. Airy Homes in St. Paul) contains high-rise units, and the largest development (Gilmor Homes in Baltimore) has approximately 500 units in its low-rise complex. In each site, one or two comparison developments were also selected for the Jobs-Plus demonstration. St. Paul's Mt. Airy Homes was excluded from the analyses presented in this paper because measures of children's well-being were not collected at this site.

The analysis sample for this paper includes 1,450 children ages 6 to 17 who are the children of respondents to the baseline survey; these children represent 850 families surveyed at baseline. Children were included in the analysis if they are the son/daughter of the respondent, the grandson/granddaughter of the respondent, or the son/daughter of the respondent's partner. As shown in Figure 1, this sample was derived from the 1,536 respondents surveyed at baseline — some of whom did not have children and some of whom had only younger children (and a very small number who had a different relationship to the child). Table 1 presents the distribution of the sample across the seven Jobs-Plus developments and shows that the sample is divided roughly evenly among them; each site had more children ages 6 to 11 than children ages 12 to 17.

The survey, for which there was a response rate of 82 percent,[19] covered such topics as community life, children, participation in education and training services, physical health, and material and psychosocial well-being.

Measures of Child Well-Being. Information was collected on children's receipt of health insurance, their participation in activities, and their well-being — all via the surveys conducted with the parents or grandparents. The measures of well-being covered two broad domains of children's development: schooling and behavioral well-being. Such aspects of children's functioning have been found to be important predictors of later adolescent achievement and adult employment.[20]

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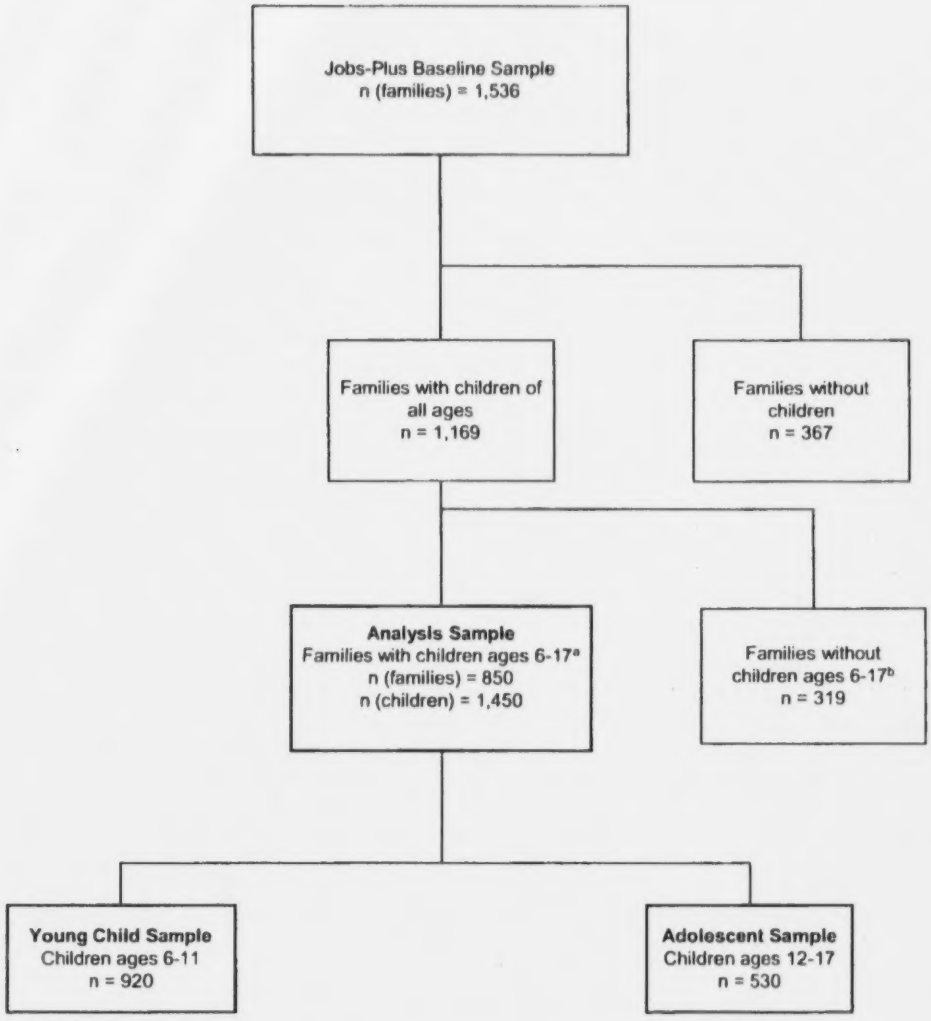
[18]Since implementation of the program, several changes have occurred. Woodhill Homes Estates in Cleveland withdrew from the Jobs-Plus demonstration in 1999, although some program-related activities remained there. In addition, Seattle's Rainier Vista has become a HOPE VI site, meaning that it has received a federal grant to tear down and rebuild the development that originally housed Jobs-Plus. Though no longer part of the demonstration, this site continues to operate a Jobs-Plus program. MDRC is now evaluating the Seattle site, but separately from the other sites in the national Jobs-Plus demonstration. Inasmuch as the purpose of this paper is to describe the children prior to the implementation of Jobs-Plus, all the sites that collected data on the children are included in the analysis.

[19]Response rate does not include St. Paul.

[20]Caspi, Wright, Moffit, and Silva, 1998; Mussen, Conger, Kagan, and Huston, 1990.

Figure 1

Derivation of the Analysis Sample



NOTES: [a]Children were included in the analysis if their relationship with the respondent was one of the following: son/daughter; grandson/granddaughter; son/daughter of respondent's partner.

[b]The majority of these families had only young children ages 0-5 years. A very small number of these families had school-age children, but these children had relationships with the respondent that excluded them from the analysis (see note a).

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Table 1

Composition of the Full Baseline Sample and the Child Analysis Sample, by Jobs-Plus Site

	All Sites	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Cleveland	Dayton	Los Angeles: Imperial Courts	Los Angeles: William Mead Homes	Seattle
Full baseline sample								
Families	1,536	218	220	252	241	208	237	160
Families without children	367	73	34	83	46	31	70	30
Families with children	1,169	145	186	169	195	177	167	130
Families with children ages 6-17	850	115	123	107	105	148	144	108
Child analysis sample								
Children ages 6-17	1,450	174	229	146	182	271	287	161
Children ages 6-11	920	109	155	111	126	157	166	96
Children ages 12-17	530	65	74	35	56	114	121	65

NOTE: Respondents from the St. Paul, MN, Jobs-Plus site have been excluded from the analysis.

For both younger children (ages 6 to 11) and older children (ages 12 to 17), positive aspects of schooling, such as receiving awards, and negative aspects of schooling, such as receiving poor grades or being suspended, were considered separately. In contrast, measures of children's behavioral well-being focused only on negative behaviors, such as police involvement, pregnancy, and school dropout. These forms of behavior problems are more easily and more accurately assessed by parents and — more so than internalizing, or withdrawn, behaviors — have been shown to be an important long-term influence on children's outcomes.[21] While data on both young children and adolescents were collected for all relevant outcomes, only adolescents are considered when examining items reflecting negative behavioral outcomes, because the incidence of negative behavioral outcomes among the younger children was too low to permit statistical analysis.

In general, test scores and reports of children themselves may be more reliable methods of assessing children's actual well-being than are parents' reports. Parental reports reflect parents' knowledge of children's behavior and functioning and are influenced by parents' own psychological functioning as well as their relationship with the child. For example, parents who are stressed or depressed may perceive their children as being more poorly behaved than parents who are less stressed, even if the behavior of the children is the same. Similarly, parents who have more positive relationships with their children may have children who disclose more details about their school achievement and behavior; therefore, parents who have closer relationships with their children may be more accurate reporters of behavior and functioning than parents who have less positive relationships. These caveats are not intended to imply that parental reports are not useful sources of data. In fact, an analysis that was conducted to assess the relation between parent-reported measures and teacher or test score measures found that the two are moderately correlated.[22] Nonetheless, in reviewing the results, it is important to remember what parental measures of children's functioning may reflect, beyond the children's actual functioning.

A factor analysis was conducted to create "sets" of measures — measures that tend to be correlated, or related, to one another. This analysis suggests that parents reported similar scores for their children across the positive aspects of school items (receipt of awards, participation in a gifted or talented program) and, separately, across the negative aspects of school items (special education, grade repetition, and suspensions/expulsions). Negative aspects of children's behavior formed a third factor (police involvement, drug and illegal activity, pregnancy, and school dropout).[23] Therefore, items were grouped on these three dimensions. For certain analy-

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[21]Caspi, Wright, Moffit, and Silva, 1998.

[22]Gennetian et al., 2002.

[23]Internal reliability for each of these sets of items was modest — at .42 for the two positive schooling items for the elementary-school-age children, .48 for the two positive schooling items for the adolescents, .47 for the negative school items for the elementary-school-age children, .42 for the negative school items for the adolescents, and .52 for the negative behavioral items for the adolescents.

ses, these sets of items were grouped into "total scores," reflecting the proportion of items endorsed by the individual in each of the three categories.

Measures of Parental Self-Sufficiency, Human Capital, Well-Being, and Functioning. Information was also collected on the characteristics of the children's parents. More specifically, parents were asked about their experiences with employment during the past 12 months, and they were categorized into parents who had worked full time (at least 30 hours per week), those who had worked part time, and those who had been employed more than a year ago (including those who had never been employed). Parents were categorized into their highest level of employment, so that those who had worked both part time and full time within the past 12 months were coded as having worked full time. Information was also collected on parents' welfare status and educational attainment. Data on household income and household residents were used to calculate each respondent's income-to-needs ratio — a measure of income relative to the federal poverty level for the family's size — to determine whether the family's income put them below the poverty threshold.

Parents were also asked about their well-being and functioning. First, parents were asked about any health-limiting conditions — factors that made it hard to them to do paid work or that limited the amount or type of work that they could do. Second, parents were asked about any drug or alcohol use in the past year. Third, domestic abuse was assessed by three questions asking whether anyone had physically harmed the respondent, threatened the respondent with physical harm, or abused the respondent (including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse) in the past 12 months. Finally, four questions assessing parents' depressive symptoms were included in the survey. These were a subset of the 20 questions from the Center for Epidemiology-Depression (CES-D) Scale;[24] they assessed the number of days in the past week that the respondent felt sad, lonely, and depressed and felt unable to "shake off the blues." Consistent with prior research, a clinical cutoff was used to identify those at risk for depression, using a score on the 4-item scale that is analogous to the recommended score of 16 on the full 20-item scale.

Measures of Neighborhood (Development) Characteristics. With regard to the characteristics of the housing developments in which the families lived, parents were asked to respond to five items about the extent to which they perceived "social cohesion and trust" in their development.[25] Sample items included "People in the development can be trusted" and "People in the development are willing to help their neighbors." Internal reliability for the scale was modest at $\alpha = .54$.

Parents were also asked about the extent to which they felt safe in their development, by responding to such items as "Do you feel safe being outdoors alone during the day?" and "Do

[24]Radloff, 1997.

[25]Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997.

you feel safe using public transportation during the night?" Items had high internal reliability at α = .85. Finally, parents were asked about the extent to which they had been the victim of a small set of violent acts — including vandalism, theft, and physical attack. Internal reliability was moderate to high at α = .66. For all three scales, summary scores were computed by averaging the items included.

Results

How are children in the Jobs-Plus developments faring in terms of school and behavioral outcomes?

This section presents information that was collected at the beginning of the Jobs-Plus study to get a first glimpse of the children's functioning. The findings (Tables 2 and 3) are presented for all children between ages 6 and 17 and then — because outcomes differ across the childhood age span — separately for children in elementary school (ages 6 to 11) and for adolescents (ages 12 to 17). Finally, outcomes for boys and girls are presented separately within these age categories (Table 3).

All Children, by Age

As shown in Table 2, the majority — but clearly not all — of the children in the Jobs-Plus housing developments were covered by health insurance. At the time of the baseline survey, 88 percent of children in elementary school and 82 percent of adolescents had health insurance.

Almost two-thirds of both age groups were reported to be participating in an activity after school, including both school- and non-school-sponsored activities. These rates appear especially high for such an at-risk sample of children.

Both positive and negative aspects of children's schooling outcomes were assessed. Only a small proportion of children — 16 percent — were in programs for talented students, but almost half of them had received some form of academic award. At the same time, almost a quarter of children (18 percent of the younger children and 33 percent of adolescents) had received poor grades in school. Rates of special education were not especially high at 12 percent overall. One-fifth of children had been suspended or expelled from school — a relatively high rate; this is especially the case with the adolescents, among whom one-third had experienced this outcome. In all cases, the younger children appear to have been doing better than the adolescents, although the differences between the age groups are most pronounced for only two outcomes: receiving poor grades and ever being suspended or expelled.

Table 2

Outcomes for Children Ages 6 to 17

Child Outcome	Child Age (Years)		
	6-17	6-11	12-17
Child has health insurance (%)	85.9	88.3	81.8
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	59.3	61.6	56.1
Child's well-being			
Schooling			
Positive outcomes			
In program for talented students (%)	15.5	15.4	15.5
Received academic award (%)	44.9	46.9	40.2
Total score	0.30	0.31	0.28
Negative outcomes			
Received poor grades (%)	23.6	18.4	33.4
In special education (%)	11.9	11.0	13.8
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	19.6	12.0	35.0
Total score	0.18	0.14	0.27
Behavior			
Ever got into trouble with police (%)			9.4
Ever had problems with drugs (%)			1.5
Ever did something illegal for money (%)			1.0
Ever got pregnant/got someone pregnant (%)			3.8
Ever dropped out of school (%)			3.2
Total score			0.04
Sample size	1,450	920	530

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: Numbers presented are the average of the averages across the seven developments rather than a true average across all respondents. This was a methodological decision intended to weight the contribution of each site to the overall average equally.

These calculations do not include respondents from the St. Paul, MN, Jobs-Plus site.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]This outcome is created from two items asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[b]Total score is the proportion of outcomes that the respondent affirms.

With regard to behavioral outcomes for the adolescents, rates of problems are not especially high. Although almost 10 percent had some involvement with the police, less than 4 percent were reported to be having any problems with drugs, engaging in illegal activity, getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant, and dropping out of school. As was noted earlier, all these measures are based on parental reports and therefore reflect parents' knowledge of children's difficulties as much as or more so than the actual prevalence of the problem behaviors.

All Children, by Gender

Next, the basic characteristics of children in Jobs-Plus developments are examined by gender, since rates of problem behaviors and difficulties in school typically are higher for boys than for girls. Table 3 shows that although rates of health insurance and participation in activities do not differ by gender, schooling outcome levels do differ for boys and girls, in predictable ways. While similarly small proportions of both genders were in programs for talented students, girls were reported to be more likely to receive an academic award and less likely to receive poor grades, to be in special education, or to be suspended or expelled. For example, 23 percent of younger boys and 40 percent of adolescent boys had received poor grades in school, compared with 14 percent of younger girls and 27 percent of adolescent girls. Interestingly, the gender gap in rates of suspensions and expulsions was smaller; 17 percent of younger boys and 38 percent of older boys had ever been suspended or expelled, compared with 7 percent of younger girls and 32 percent of older girls.

Gender differences in the negative behavioral outcomes were much smaller, surprisingly: Similar proportions of adolescent boys and girls were reported to have been involved with the police, to have had problems with drugs, to have done something illegal, and to have dropped out of school. Only in parental reports of whether adolescents had gotten pregnant or gotten someone pregnant did rates differ by gender, possibly because parents are less accurate in reporting this behavior for boys than for their girls. While only 1 percent of adolescent boys were reported to have gotten someone pregnant, 6 percent of adolescent girls were reported to have been pregnant.

How does the subset of children who live in families receiving welfare in the Jobs-Plus developments compare with children in samples of welfare families in other studies (who may or may not be living in public housing)?

This section compares the subset of children in families receiving welfare in the Jobs-Plus developments with children in several studies of the effects of welfare programs on children. There is some debate about whether children living in public housing should fare more poorly than children from comparable family backgrounds who are not necessarily living in public housing. On the one hand, discussions have focused on the negative consequences to children of living in communities of concentrated poverty — places with poor schools, violent

Table 3

Outcomes for Children Ages 6 to17, by Age and Gender

Child Outcome	Children Ages 6-11		Children Ages 12-1 7	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Child has health insurance (%)	87.4	89.3	84.3	79.3
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	61.6	61.5	55.6	56.6
Child's well-being				
Schooling				
Positive outcomes				
In program for talented students (%)	13.9	16.8	15.5	15.2
Received academic award (%)	41.1	52.4	37.9	42.7
Total score	0.28	0.35	0.27	0.29
Negative outcomes				
Received poor grades (%)	22.7	14.4	40.1	27.1
In special education (%)	13.4	8.4	20.2	7.6
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	16.9	7.0	38.6	31.5
Total score	0.18	0.10	0.33	0.22
Behavior				
Ever got into trouble with police (%)			9.8	8.8
Ever had problems with drugs (%)			1.3	1.7
Ever did something illegal for money (%)			1.1	1.1
Ever got pregnant/got someone pregnant (%)			1.3	6.2
Ever dropped out of school (%)			2.8	3.8
Total score			0.03	0.04
Sample size	450	470	254	276

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: Numbers presented are the average of the averages across the seven developments rather than a true average across all respondents. This was a methodological decision intended to weight the contribution of each site to the overall average equally.

These calculations do not include respondents from the St. Paul, MN, Jobs-Plus site.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]This outcome is created from two items asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[b]Total score is the proportion of outcomes that the respondent affirms.

gangs, rampant drug use, and few positive adult role models. On the other hand, some research has suggested that the residential stability, improved living conditions, and financial benefit of public housing may help to improve the life chances of children.[26] By comparing the children of welfare recipient families who were living in Jobs Plus developments at the beginning of the demonstration with similar children living in a broad range of housing conditions, the relative risk for this group of children can be examined, within a group of families who were all receiving welfare.

Children who were assessed at the beginning of the Jobs-Plus study are compared with children in four welfare demonstration studies that took place in seven sites across the United States: Escambia County, Florida (Florida's Family Transition Program [FTP]); seven urban and rural counties in Minnesota (Minnesota's Family Investment Program [MFIP]); Manchester and New Haven, Connecticut (Connecticut's Jobs First evaluation [Jobs First]); Atlanta, Georgia; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Riverside, California; and Portland, Oregon (the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies [NEWWS]).[27] These studies provide information on a selected set of measures that are comparable to those studied in Jobs-Plus. Average levels of functioning for elementary-school-age and adolescent children in Jobs-Plus developments are compared with the control groups in these studies — children whose parents were subject to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) system; a minority of these children were living in public housing. Because all the families in the comparison studies were receiving welfare and because welfare status may affect children's outcomes, only those children in the Jobs-Plus sample who were receiving welfare are included here. Although the measures used in studying the Jobs-Plus sample are not identical to those used in the other evaluations, useful comparisons can be made that indicate how disadvantaged the Jobs-Plus children of welfare recipients were, relative to other samples of children in families receiving welfare. Tables 4 and 5 present these comparisons, which are discussed below.

Elementary School Children

Table 4 focuses on children in elementary school and presents comparisons of health insurance receipt, participation in extracurricular activities, and schooling measures.

The rate of health insurance coverage is high in the Jobs-Plus welfare sample: 93 percent of children had health insurance. This rate is slightly above the average for the welfare studies in Florida, Minnesota, and Connecticut, which ranged from 81 percent in FTP to 88 percent in MFIP to 96 percent in Jobs First.

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[26]Newman and Harkness, 2000.

[27]Notably, the proportion of these families living in public housing ranged quite dramatically, from 2 percent to 35 percent. In most of these studies, however, the proportion of families living in public housing was under 10 percent.

Table 4

Selected Characteristics of Elementary-School-Age Children in Jobs-Plus Developments, Compared with Characteristics of Children in Other Welfare Evaluation Studies

	Jobs-Plus	Welfare Evaluation Studies						
Outcome (%)	Welfare Recipients[a]	Florida's FTP	Minnesota's MFIP	Connecticut's Jobs First	Atlanta, GA, NEWWS	Grand Rapids, MI, NEWWS	Riverside, CA, NEWWS	Portland, OR, NEWWS
Covered by health insurance[b]	92.9	80.7	88.3	95.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Participated in extracurricular activities[c]	61.5	34.9	55.8	37.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance in school					N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performing below average		9.6	9.2	6.4				
Received poor grades in past year	19.5							
Special education								
Currently or in the past year[d]	11.8				6.4	19.3	13.8	17.8
In the last 3 or 4 years[e]		11.5	20.2	14.7				
Suspended/expelled[f,g,h]	12.3	9.6	9.8	10.0	10.4	7.5	6.8	10.6

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the Jobs-Plus baseline survey, the FTP four-year client survey, the MFIP 36-month client survey, the Jobs First three-year client survey, and the NEWWS five-year client survey.

NOTES: Studies included in comparison are: Florida's Family Transition Program (FTP), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Connecticut's Jobs First Program, and the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS).

The sample from the Jobs-Plus baseline survey includes welfare recipient children ages 6-11 at the time of the survey. The sample from the FTP four-year client survey includes children ages 5-12 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from August 1994 to February 1995 unless otherwise noted. The sample from the MFIP 36-month client survey includes focal children ages 5-12 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from April 1, 1994, to October 31, 1994. The sample from the Jobs First three-year client survey includes children ages 5-12 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from April 1996 to February 1997 unless otherwise noted. The sample from the NEWWS five-year survey includes children ages 6-11 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from March 1992 to June 1993.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]Numbers presented in this column are the average of the averages across the seven developments rather than a true average across all respondents. This was a methodological decision intended to weight the contribution of each site to the overall average equally.

[b]FTP and Jobs First focal children ages 5-12.

(continued)

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Table 4 (continued)

[c]This outcome is created from three items in FTP, MFIP, and Jobs First asking about participation in sports in or out of school, lessons after school or on weekends, and clubs/organizations after school or on weekends and two items in Jobs-Plus asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[d]Currently in NEWWS and in the past year for Jobs-Plus.

[e]Three years for MFIP and Jobs First and four years for FTP.

[f]Three years for MFIP and Jobs First, four years for FTP, and ever for Jobs-Plus.

[g]In most cases for NEWWS, this is measured over the last three years. For those who did not answer the two-year survey, this is measured over the last five years.

[h]In Jobs First, this is for suspended only. The percentage expelled over the last three years in Jobs First is 0.4 percent.

With regard to participation in extracurricular activities, about 62 percent of children in the Jobs-Plus developments took part. Such activities are thought to provide structured after-school environments for young school-age children — not only helping them in their schoolwork but also reducing the amount of unstructured time they spend with peers, which can lead to delinquent activity.[28] Despite minor differences in how the studies defined measures, this rate in Jobs-Plus is similar to the rate in MFIP (56 percent), but it is much higher than the rates in Florida's FTP (35 percent) and Connecticut's Jobs First (37 percent). Children in the Jobs-Plus developments were *more* likely than children in the other studies to participate in extracurricular activities.

With regard to the three schooling outcomes — performance in school, receipt of special education, and being suspended or expelled — rates for the children in the Jobs-Plus developments are similar to or slightly worse than rates for the comparison samples, especially considering differences in the measures collected. Almost 20 percent of the Jobs-Plus respondents said that their child had received poor grades in the past year. This rate is much higher than the 6 percent to 10 percent among children in the welfare studies, although it may partly reflect differences in the measures collected — inasmuch as a child may receive a poor grade but not be reported by parents as performing below average overall. However, the rate of special education for children in the Jobs-Plus developments — at 12 percent — reflects the average across the welfare evaluation studies, which ranged from 6 percent to 20 percent. The rate of suspensions in Jobs-Plus was also at 12 percent of children — only slightly higher than in the welfare demonstration studies, which ranged from 7 percent to 11 percent over a three- to four-year period.

In sum, young children in Jobs-Plus developments at the beginning of the demonstration were not faring much differently than other children in families receiving welfare, particularly considering the few items available to make these comparisons across studies. The primary difference is that children in the Jobs-Plus sample had slightly higher rates of participation in extracurricular activities and of difficulties in school.

Adolescents

Table 5 focuses on adolescents and presents comparisons of participation in extracurricular activities, schooling measures, and behavioral outcomes.

About 52 percent of the adolescents in the Jobs-Plus developments were participating in extracurricular activities at the beginning of the demonstration, compared with a much lower rate of 41 percent of adolescents in Florida's FTP — the only other study for which such data are available.

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[28]Posner and Vandell, 1994, 1999.

Table 5

Selected Characteristics of Adolescents in Jobs-Plus Developments, Compared with Characteristics of Adolescents in Other Welfare Evaluation Studies

Outcome (%)	Jobs-Plus Welfare Recipients[a]	Welfare Evaluation Studies						
		Florida's FTP	Minnesota's MFIP	Connecticut's Jobs First	Atlanta, GA, NEWWS	Grand Rapids, MI, NEWWS	Riverside, CA, NEWWS	Portland, OR, NEWWS
Participated in extracurricular acitivties[b]	51.7	40.9	N/A	38.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance in school								
Performing below average		10.9	18.6	7.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Received poor grades in the past year	31.8							
Special education			N/A					
In the past year	12.5				7.9	18.8	10.6	11.3
In the last 3 or 4 years[c]		15.4		15.5				
Suspended/expelled[d,e,f]	36.4	34.8	N/A	27.4	29.7	27.3	23.7	20.2
Dropped out[g]	3.3	3.9	N/A	11.1	4.4	7.0	4.1	7.4
Had a baby[g]	4.3	3.3	N/A	3.3	6.0	4.8	1.6	1.0
Police involvement			N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Arrested by the police in the last 3 or 4 years[c]		9.2		11.9				
Ever got into trouble with the police	7.3							

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from the Jobs-Plus baseline survey, the FTP four-year client survey, the MFIP 36-month client survey, the Jobs First three-year client survey, and the NEWWS five-year client survey.

NOTES: Studies included in comparison are: Florida's Family Transition Program (FTP), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Connecticut's Jobs First Program, and the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS).

The sample from the Jobs-Plus baseline survey includes welfare recipient children ages 6-11 at the time of the survey. The sample from the FTP four-year client survey includes children ages 5-12 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from August 1994 to February 1995 unless otherwise noted. The sample from the MFIP 36-month client survey includes focal children ages 5-12 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from April 1, 1994, to October 31, 1994. The sample from the Jobs First three-year client survey includes children ages 5-12 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from April 1996 to February 1997 unless otherwise noted. The sample from the NEWWS five-year survey includes children ages 6-11 at the time of the survey in families randomly assigned from March 1992 to June 1993.

(continued)

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Table 5 (continued)

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]Numbers presented in this column are the average of the averages across the seven developments rather than a true average across all respondents. This was a methodological decision intended to weight the contribution of each site to the overall average equally.

[b]This outcome is created from three items in FTP, MFIP, and Jobs First asking about participation in sports in or out of school, lessons after school or on weekends, and clubs/organizations after school or on weekends and two items in Jobs-Plus asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[c]Three years for MFIP and Jobs First and four years for FTP.

[d]Three years for MFIP and Jobs First, four years for FTP, and ever for Jobs-Plus.

[e]In most cases for NEWWS, this is measured over the last three years. For those who did not answer the two-year survey, this is measured over the last five years.

[f]In Jobs First, this is for suspended only. The percentage expelled over the last three years in Jobs First is 2.2 percent.

[g]Three years for Jobs-First, four years for FTP, and ever in Jobs-Plus and NEWWS.

With regard to schooling outcomes — performance, receipt of special education, being suspended or expelled, and dropping out — rates for adolescents at the beginning of the Jobs-Plus demonstration indicate that they were performing as well as or slightly worse than their counterparts in the welfare evaluation studies, with one exception: The rate of school dropout was lower in the Jobs-Plus sample. These measures are not unrelated; that is, if fewer adolescents in the Jobs-Plus developments were dropping out of school, then those who remained in school might have shown increased rates of problems. About 32 percent of the Jobs-Plus sample received poor grades in the past year, compared with only about 8 percent to 19 percent of adolescents in the welfare evaluations. While the Jobs-Plus sample's rate of receipt of special education (13 percent) reflects the average rate across the comparison studies, the sample's rate of suspensions/expulsions (36 percent) is higher than the range for the other studies. On the other hand, the school dropout rate for adolescents at the beginning of the Jobs-Plus demonstration — at 3 percent — is the lowest rate observed.

For the two behavioral outcomes — having a baby and being involved with the police — the rates for adolescents in the Jobs-Plus developments are about the average of those observed in the other studies, with 4 percent having ever had a baby and 7 percent having ever been involved with the police.

In summary, adolescents in the Jobs-Plus developments were at greater risk than their welfare recipient peers on some measures of schooling but were less likely to drop out. Their rates of childbirth and police involvement at the beginning of the demonstration were similar to rates in studies of adolescents in welfare recipient families. Given their residence in public housing, it might have been expected that adolescents in the Jobs-Plus developments would fare significantly worse than peers in similar low-income families, but that was not the case in this study.

Even so, to say that both the adolescents and the younger children in the Jobs-Plus samples were not faring significantly worse than children in other welfare recipient families is not to say that they were performing well. The rates of suspensions and expulsions for both age groups are still high, as is the rate of police involvement for adolescents. But these findings do suggest that — although at risk — children and adolescents in this small set of housing projects at the beginning of the Jobs-Plus demonstration were not dissimilar from children in other families receiving welfare.

To what extent do children's outcomes differ depending on whether or not their parents are employed and whether or not their parents are receiving welfare?

Analyses were conducted to examine the extent to which parents' labor market and welfare characteristics differentiated children's outcomes within the Jobs-Plus developments.

Such an analysis helps to inform hypotheses about how children may fare in programs like Jobs-Plus as a result of changes in parents' economic outcomes. The estimates reflect that the data were collected by development, by calculating the *average* relation between parents' and children's characteristics across the developments. The results of these analyses are presented in Tables 6 and 7, where stars in the right-hand columns indicate relations that are statistically significant, or unlikely to have arisen by chance.

First, outcomes for children are examined as a function of parents' employment status — comparing children whose parents (1) were employed full time within the past year or (2) were employed part time within the past year or (3) were last employed more than a year ago (including those who had never been employed).[29] As shown in Table 6, children's rates of health insurance coverage differed across these three groups of families; parents who were employed full time and were making the greatest strides toward self-sufficiency were the *least* likely to have children with health insurance coverage. As shown later (Table 7), this likely reflects the link between welfare status and health insurance status among poor families.

However, other measures — of children's participation in extracurricular activities and of their schooling — were rarely different across groups defined by parents' employment status. The only statistically significant difference across the groups is seen in children's experience in special education; children whose parents were employed either part time or full time were less likely to be in special education than children whose parents were last employed more than a year prior to the survey. And although the rates of receipt of an award do appear to differ across the employment categories, they are not quite statistically significant. However, on all other measures of children's school functioning — both positive and negative — there is no relation to parents' employment status. Nor is there any evidence that adolescents' behavior problems were related to parents' employment.

While different outcomes might have been expected for children of employed versus nonemployed parents, prior research suggests that much, if not all, of the differences stem from differences in parents' demographic attributes, skills, personalities, and child-rearing practices rather than from differences in their employment status per se.[30] In this case, the fact that a set of families with an extremely restricted socioeconomic range was examined may reduce any differences typically observed between employed and nonemployed families.

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[29]For more information about the background and employment characteristics of these three groups of parents in the Jobs-Plus developments, see Martinez (2002).

[30]Zaslow, McGroder, Cave, and Mariner, 1999.

Table 6

Outcomes for Children Ages 6 to 17, by Employment History of Jobs-Plus Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Parent Employed Within Past Year, Full Time	Parent Employed Within Past Year, Part Time	Parent Last Employed More Than One Year Ago
Child has health insurance (%)	80.6	88.7	92.4 •
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	61.8	65.5	51.7
Child's well-being			
Schooling			
Positive outcomes			
In program for talented students (%)	16.8	16.7	13.5
Received academic award (%)	45.5	52.4	39.0
Total score[b]	0.31	0.34	0.26
Negative outcomes			
Received poor grades (%)	23.3	24.7	23.5
In special education (%)	9.8	9.7	16.2 •••
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	19.9	20.5	18.7
Total score[b]	0.18	0.18	0.19
Sample size (N=1,440)	*722*	*278*	*440*
Behavior[c]			
Ever got into trouble with police (%)	11.4	4.6	9.6
Ever had problems with drugs (%)	1.7	2.7	0.3
Ever did something illegal for money (%)	1.8	0.0	0.0
Ever got pregnant/got someone pregnant (%)	2.2	7.4	5.8
Ever dropped out of school (%)	2.2	4.4	4.0
Total score[b]	0.04	0.04	0.04
Sample size (N=530)	*280*	*90*	*160*

(continued)

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Table 6 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: The stars indicate statistically significant differences across the employment groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as * = 10 percent, ** = 5 percent, ***= 1 percent.

These calculations do not include respondents from the St. Paul, MN, Jobs-Plus site.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]This outcome is created from two items asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[b]Total score is the proportion of outcomes that the respondent affirms.

[c]Behavior outcomes are analyzed only for children ages 12 to 17.

Table 7

Outcomes for Children Ages 6 to 17, by Welfare Status of Jobs-Plus Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Parent Received AFDC/TANF in Last 12 Months	Parent Did Not Receive AFDC/TANF in Last 12 Months
Child has health insurance (%)	91.9	75.4 ***
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	57.8	61.4
Child's well-being		
Schooling		
Positive outcomes		
In program for talented students (%)	14.5	17.5
Received academic award (%)	45.1	44.6
Total score[b]	0.30	0.31
Negative outcomes		
Received poor grades (%)	23.4	24.7
In special education (%)	12.1	12.5
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	19.2	20.0
Total score[b]	0.18	0.19
Sample size (N=1,419)	*890*	*529*
Behavior[c]		
Ever got into trouble with police (%)	7.3	10.9
Ever had problems with drugs (%)	1.4	1.9
Ever did something illegal for money (%)	0.5	1.6
Ever got pregnant/got someone pregnant (%)	4.3	2.8
Ever dropped out of school (%)	3.3	3.5
Total score[b]	0.03	0.04
Sample size (N=521)	*297*	*224*

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: The stars indicate statistically significant differences across the welfare receipt groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as * = 10 percent, ** = 5 percent, ***= 1 percent.

These calculations do not include respondents from the St. Paul, MN, Jobs-Plus site.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]This outcome is created from two items asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[b]Total score is the proportion of outcomes that the respondent affirms.

[c]Behavior outcomes are analyzed only for children ages 12 to 17.

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Except in the case of health insurance coverage, measures of children's well-being did not differ depending on parents' welfare status (Table 7). Parents who were receiving welfare in the year prior to the survey interview were more likely to have children covered by health insurance than parents who were not receiving welfare; 92 percent of children in welfare families were covered by health insurance, compared with 75 percent of children in nonwelfare families. However, measures of schooling and behavior did not differ between children whose families received welfare and children whose families did not.

These findings suggest that parents' employment and welfare status are unrelated to most child outcomes in this at-risk sample. The next section analyzes the extent to which the characteristics of public housing developments — as compared with the characteristics of parents — are associated with outcomes for children and also examines how a broader set of parental characteristics (including depression and domestic violence) may be associated with children's outcomes as well.

To what extent are children's outcomes related to characteristics of the Jobs-Plus housing developments?

As indicated at the outset, the conceptual framework for the Jobs Plus demonstration recognizes that the characteristics of the neighborhood — the culture and climate of the housing development itself — have effects on children. The following analysis first examines the degree to which children's schooling and well-being varied significantly across the developments and then explores the characteristics of parents and developments that are associated with such variation. Finally, this section examines how these relationships compare with those observed between parents' characteristics and measures of children's well-being.

Variation Across Housing Developments

Table 8 presents average outcomes on measures of children's rates of health insurance, participation in activities, and well-being across the seven Jobs-Plus public housing developments. Table 9 presents the same measures separately for children ages 6 to 11 and for children ages 12 to 17. The right-hand columns indicate whether differences in average outcomes across the sites are statistically significant. These findings — presented at the development level — indicate the difficulties that individual Jobs-Plus developments will face in improving the outcomes for children as well as the extent to which children varied across the public housing developments in this study.

As can be seen in the Table 8, children's rates of health insurance and participation in activities varied significantly across housing developments; rates of health insurance ranged from a low of 74 percent at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles to a high of 100 percent in Chattanooga. These differences likely reflect differences in the proportions of the sample that

Table 8

Outcomes for Children Ages 6 to 17, by Jobs-Plus Site

Child Outcome	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Cleveland	Dayton	Los Angeles: Imperial Courts	Los Angeles: William Mead Homes	Seattle	P-Value of Difference Across Developments	
Child has health insurance (%)	79.2	100.0	95.0	85.7	87.1	73.5	80.7	<.0001	***
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	68.2	66.1	59.0	51.4	57.9	50.5	62.1	0.00	***
Child's well-being									
Schooling									
Positive outcomes									
In program for talented students (%)	24.1	15.1	13.4	14.4	15.1	8.2	18.2	0.00	***
Received academic award (%)	44.1	37.5	58.3	55.2	46.2	36.2	36.5	<.0001	***
Total score[b]	0.34	0.26	0.36	0.35	0.31	0.22	0.28	<.0001	***
Negative outcomes									
Received poor grades (%)	26.5	28.1	27.8	29.8	23.7	17.2	11.9	0.00	***
In special education (%)	18.2	11.6	10.4	11.6	7.1	8.8	15.7	0.01	***
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	27.3	29.6	23.6	20.3	16.2	8.7	11.2	<.0001	***
Total score[b]	0.24	0.23	0.21	0.21	0.16	0.12	0.13	<.0001	***
Sample size	174	229	146	182	271	287	161		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: The stars indicate statistically significant differences across the developments. Statistical significance levels are indicated as * = 10 percent, ** = 5 percent, *** = 1 percent.

These calculations do not include respondents from the St. Paul, MN, Jobs-Plus site.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]This outcome is created from two items asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[b]Total score is the proportion of outcomes that the respondent affirms.

Table 9

Outcomes for Children Ages 6 to 17, by Jobs-Plus Development and Child Age

Child Outcome	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Cleveland	Dayton	Los Angeles: Imperial Courts	Los Angeles: William Mead Homes	Seattle	P-Value of Difference Across Developments
Ages 6 to 11								
Child has health insurance (%)	83.3	100.0	95.3	90.5	91.7	73.6	83.3	<.0001 ***
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	64.8	67.8	59.6	51.2	65.6	60.7	61.5	0.13
Child's well-being								
Schooling								
Positive outcomes								
In program for talented students (%)	24.1	16.1	14.0	12.8	16.9	7.4	16.7	0.01 **
Received academic award (%)	45.4	42.8	61.5	60.8	46.8	40.4	30.4	<.0001 ***
Total score[b]	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.00 ***
Negative outcomes								
Received poor grades (%)	23.1	23.7	22.9	24.0	18.2	10.4	6.3	0.00 ***
In special education (%)	15.7	11.2	9.2	10.4	6.5	8.5	15.8	0.15
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	15.9	21.7	11.0	15.1	8.9	5.4	6.3	0.00 ***
Total score[b]	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.00 ***
Sample size (N=920)	*109*	*155*	*111*	*126*	*157*	*166*	*96*	

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

Child Outcome	Baltimore	Chattanooga	Cleveland	Dayton	Los Angeles: Imperial Courts	Los Angeles: William Mead Homes	Seattle	P-Value of Difference Across Developments	
Ages 12 to 17									
Child has health insurance (%)	72.3	100.0	94.1	75.0	80.7	73.3	76.9	<.0001	***
Child has taken part in an activity (%)[a]	74.2	62.5	57.1	51.8	47.3	36.7	63.1	<.0001	***
Child's well-being									
Schooling									
Positive outcomes									
In program for talented students (%)	24.2	12.9	11.4	17.9	12.6	9.2	20.3	0.12	
Received academic award (%)	41.9	26.4	48.6	42.9	45.5	30.5	45.3	0.04	**
Total score[b]	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.02	**
Negative outcomes									
Received poor grades (%)	32.3	37.5	42.9	42.9	31.3	26.4	20.3	0.07	*
In special education (%)	22.6	12.5	14.3	14.3	8.0	9.1	15.6	0.13	
Ever suspended/expelled (%)	46.2	45.9	62.9	32.1	26.3	13.2	18.5	<.0001	***
Total score[b]	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	<.0001	***
Behavior									
Ever got into trouble with police (%)	12.3	5.4	8.6	12.5	14.9	5.8	6.2	0.15	
Ever had problems with drugs (%)	4.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.8	0.0	0.18	
Ever did something illegal for money (%)	1.5	0.0	2.9	1.8	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.51	
Ever got pregnant/got someone pregnant (%)	7.7	5.4	5.7	5.4	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.06	*
Ever dropped out of school (%)	3.1	0.0	5.7	5.4	2.6	2.5	3.1	0.60	
Total score[b]	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.05	**
Sample size (N=530)	*65*	*74*	*35*	*56*	*114*	*121*	*65*		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: The stars indicate statistically significant differences across the developments. Statistical significance levels are indicated as * = 10 percent, ** = 5 percent, ***= 1 percent.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

[a]This outcome is created from two items asking about participation in school-sponsored activities such as clubs, sports, tutoring, or extended day programs and activities outside school (including sports teams, lessons, and activities at a recreation center, community center, or youth organization).

[b]Total score is the proportion of outcomes that the respondent affirms.

were receiving welfare in these sites as well as differences in local health insurance policies and outreach.

For children's participation in activities and children's positive and negative school outcomes, significant differences were found across the sites on each of the outcomes assessed and on the total scores (Table 8). Variation for the older children across sites in negative behavioral outcomes was significant only for the proportion of adolescents getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant and for the total score (Table 9).

Two points are noteworthy. First, there is wide variation across the seven developments in the outcomes assessed (larger even than the variation shown earlier between the younger and the older children). For example, children's rates of receipt of academic awards range from a low of 36 percent at William Mead Homes in Los Angeles to a high of 58 percent in Cleveland. Similarly, their rates of suspensions and expulsions range from a low of almost 9 percent at William Mead Homes to a high of almost 30 percent in Chattanooga. Second, sites with the highest levels of positive outcomes (like receiving awards) are not the same sites with the lowest levels of negative outcomes. One might have expected to find "good sites" with a high percentage of children who had positive school outcomes (for example, receiving awards) and a low percentage of children who had negative school outcomes (for example, receiving poor grades, being suspended or expelled). Similarly, one might have expected to find "bad sites" with a low percentage of children who had positive school outcomes and a high percentage of children who had negative school outcomes. Instead, those sites where children were doing well as measured by the number who were receiving awards or were enrolled in talented programs were often the same sites where children were doing poorly as measured by such items as suspensions and poor grades. For example, Los Angeles's William Mead Homes had the lowest rate of suspensions and expulsions but also had one of the lowest rates of receiving academic awards.

Multivariate Analyses

Finally, multivariate analyses were conducted to examine the extent to which characteristics of housing developments — as well as parents' mental health and well-being — were related to children's outcomes. This analysis includes both the Jobs-Plus developments and the comparison developments (for a total sample of 17 developments) in order to increase the precision of the estimates and to provide for sufficient variation in the developments' important characteristics, to assess their contribution to children's well-being. These relations are examined using Hierarchical Linear Modeling, a technique that assesses the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and children's outcomes, accounting for the fact that children are nested within neighborhoods.

Three main characteristics of housing developments are considered: the labor market characteristics of the parents living in the development, parents' reports of their perceptions of safety and violence in the development, and parents' perceived sense of cohesion and trust in the development. While the first characteristic is the one most directly affected by Jobs-Plus, the latter two may be affected indirectly, if Jobs-Plus changes the housing development's culture and the conditions. Because children are nested within the developments in which their families live, the "contextual" effects of the developments themselves can be differentiated from the "individual" effects of parents. For example, examining labor market characteristics aggregated to the development level helps us to understand how children may be affected as more of the adults in their immediate environment make the transition from welfare to work. Moreover, examining these characteristics at both the family and the development levels helps to isolate the unique contributions of parent's own employment, compared with the overall employment rate in the larger environment. Inasmuch as Jobs-Plus was intended to alter both individual parents and the more global features of housing developments, this analysis is well-suited to help generate more informed hypotheses about the potential pathways by which Jobs-Plus might affect children.

The following analyses examine these characteristics of housing developments (perceived safety, violence, and cohesion; and the overall rates of employment, welfare receipt, and poverty) and their effects on children's participation in extracurricular activities and on the three measures of children's well-being: positive schooling outcomes, negative schooling outcomes, and behavioral outcomes. The role of parental characteristics is also examined — both the effects of parents' labor market characteristics (work status, welfare receipt, poverty status, educational attainment) and the effects of parents' well-being and functioning (health status, depression, domestic abuse, alcohol and drug use). Children may be influenced as much by parents' labor market characteristics as by parents' physical and mental health and well-being. Because all these relations are examined simultaneously in this multivariate analysis, each characteristic reflects its association with the relevant child outcome, holding constant all other characteristics. This isolates the unique contribution of the neighborhood characteristic, after accounting for the effects of parents' functioning.

Table 10 presents the results of these analyses. Headings across the top of the table identify the child outcomes examined, and the left-hand column lists the variables: the demographic characteristics of the parents and children; the parents' labor market characteristics, physical and mental health, experience with domestic abuse and substance use; and the six neighborhood characteristics. Stars in the columns indicate relations that are statistically significant. Each estimate reflects the proportion of a standard deviation increase that is associated with a one-unit increase in the independent variable listed in the left-hand column. So, for example, compared with girls, boys scored 20 percent of a standard deviation lower on measures of positive schooling outcomes. Similarly, each successive year of age is associated with a score on positive schooling outcomes that is 10 percent of a standard deviation lower.

Table 10

Multivariate Analysis of the Relation Between Parental and Neighborhood Characteristics and Child Outcomes Across Jobs-Plus and Comparison Developments

Independent Variables	Parameter Estimates: Participation in Activities, Ages 6-17	Positive School Outcomes, Ages 6-17	Negative School Outcomes, Ages 6-17	Negative Behavior Outcomes, Ages 12-17
Demographic variables				
Gender of child	0.051	-0.208 **	0.374 **	0.182
Age of child	0.034	-0.108 *	0.442 **	N/A
Never married	0.050	-0.085	0.160	0.014
Previously married	0.076	-0.072	0.130	-0.269
Black	0.292 **	0.017	0.318 **	-0.671
Hispanic	0.122	0.179	0.164	-0.095
Parents' self-sufficiency and human capital				
Employed full time	0.141	0.060	0.005	-0.051
Employed part time	0.165 *	0.165 **	0.010	0.026
Income below the poverty line	0.158 **	0.049	0.055	0.071
Welfare receipt	0.042	-0.057	0.037	-0.051
High school diploma or GED	0.226 **	0.130 **	-0.065	0.027
Parents' well-being and functioning				
Condition that limits wor	-0.016	-0.100	0.141 **	0.136
Past alcohol or drug use	0.025	-0.020	0.142 **	-0.136
Domestic abuse	0.027	-0.010	0.168 *	0.388 *
Depression	-0.009	-0.005	0.024 **	0.039 *
Neighborhood processes				
Proportion of parents who are employed full time	-0.388	-0.120	0.202	-0.151
Proportion of parents with income below the poverty line	-1.155 **	-0.521	0.621	1.108
Proportion of parents receiving welfare	-0.317	0.442	-0.543 *	0.764
Social cohesion and trust	0.137 **	-0.113	-0.095 *	-0.170
Safety in developmen	-0.041	-0.015	-0.002	-0.032
Violence in development	-0.125	-0.243	0.020	0.173
Sample size (developments)	17	17	17	17
(children)	2,311	2,311	2,311	998

SOURCE: MDRC calculations from Jobs-Plus baseline survey.

NOTES: Statistical significance levels are indicated as * = 10 percent, ** = 5 percent, ***= 1 percent.

These calculations include respondents from both the Jobs-Plus and the comparison developments in all sites except St. Paul, MN, for a total of 17 developments.

All measures were collected via reports by parents and grandparents.

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Beginning with the demographic characteristics of families, children's age and gender are found to be associated with the level of positive and negative schooling outcomes. Older children and boys show lower levels of receiving awards and higher levels of the negative schooling score (consisting of doing poorly in school, being suspended or expelled, repeating a grade, and receiving special education). Also, relative to white children, black children show higher levels of the negative schooling score but also higher participation in after-school activities. Parents' marital status was not related to any of the child outcomes examined.

The analyses find that parents' labor market characteristics are associated with children's participation in after-school activities and with *positive* aspects of schooling but that measures of parents' physical and mental health and well-being are associated with *negative* aspects of children's schooling and behavioral outcomes, in predictable ways. That is, parents who were employed part time and had a high school diploma were more likely to have children who were receiving awards, but these and the other labor market characteristics (that is, full-time employment and the family's income level) are not associated with children's difficulties in school (suspensions, special education, and performance), nor are they associated with adolescent's problem behavior outside school. Rather, parents who experienced domestic abuse and who were depressed were more likely to have children who had more problems in school *and* negative behavioral outcomes, while parents who used alcohol or drugs and who had a health problem were more likely to have children who had more problems in school.

Finally, with regard to neighborhood characteristics, the proportion of families who were employed — which is assessed at the development level — is not associated with differences in children's well-being. That is, the proportion of families who worked full time is not associated with differences in children's participation in activities or children's functioning. Instead, the only aspects of the housing development that are associated with the child outcomes (beyond the individual parental characteristics) appear to be the amount of cohesion and trust in the neighborhood that the parents perceived and — each for a single outcome — the proportion of families who were receiving welfare and the proportion of families who were living below the poverty line. That is, the greater the cohesion and trust perceived by the parent, the more likely the child was to participate in after-school activities, and the lower the level of negative schooling outcomes (like poor grades and suspensions). The analyses also find that the higher the proportion of families who were poor, the less likely the child was to participate in after-school activities. Unexpectedly, the higher the proportion of families who were receiving welfare, the *less* likely the child was to have problems in school.

Analyses were also conducted separately for adolescent and younger children, to ascertain whether the neighborhood effects might be more pronounced for older children. Because adolescents have more direct experiences within the housing development, it was hypothesized that neighborhood effects might be stronger for them than for their younger peers. These analy-

ses, however, suggest that the effects observed for the older and younger children — when examined separately — show the same pattern of findings as for the full sample.

Conclusion

This paper provides a snapshot of the children living in the public housing developments that are part of the Jobs-Plus demonstration. The findings suggest that on some, but by no means all, measures, these children are at high risk of negative outcomes. Rates of suspensions and expulsions appear particularly high — at one-fifth of all children and one-third of adolescents — while rates of special education (only 15 percent of the sample) and teen pregnancy (only 3 percent) appear lower than one might expect in such a high-risk group of children. Moreover, high proportions of children were covered by health insurance and engaged in after-school activities. Not surprisingly, older children and boys faced greater risks to their well-being than younger children and girls.

The findings also indicate that children in families receiving welfare in the Jobs-Plus developments were at only slightly greater risk with regard to schooling and behavioral outcomes when compared with other children receiving welfare (only some of whom were living in public housing). While only a few measures could be compared, the levels of performance in school and rates of special education, suspensions, and expulsions for both the younger and the older children — and school dropout, teen childbearing and police involvement for older children — were generally comparable to (or demonstrated only slightly higher levels of risk than) the rates in seven comparison studies of welfare programs across the United States. While this by no means suggests that children in Jobs-Plus are not at risk, it does suggest that their risks may not be greater than those of children in other low-income families. Although skeptics have argued that the concentrated poverty and violence in public housing may impair young children's development, studies controlling for observed and unobserved differences between children in public housing and other poor children find that public housing may actually be beneficial to children's development, in both the short and the long term.[31]

What do the findings say about how Jobs-Plus may affect children and adolescents? The fact that only limited associations were found between children's outcomes and parents' own employment status points to few likely effects of Jobs-Plus on children, if Jobs-Plus succeeds only at changing parents' employment but not other aspects of their self-sufficiency and well-being. Parents' employment was unrelated to most outcomes for children, including outcomes that cause the most concern — school problems (such as poor performance and suspensions) and behavioral problems (like teenage childbirth and police involvement). Studies of the effects of welfare and work policies on children have suggested that programs that increase par-

[31] Currie and Yelkowitz, 2000; Newman and Harkness, 2002.

ents' employment have few effects on elementary-school-age children but that programs that succeed in increasing employment and income — by supplementing earnings — can benefit children.[32] Thus, to the extent that Jobs-Plus increases family income — for example, by increasing the receipt of the Earned Income Tax Credit and reducing the rent burden as parents earn more — Jobs Plus might be expected to achieve positive effects for children. Increasing family income will be a challenge for Jobs-Plus, but prior experimental work as well as these initial nonexperimental analyses suggest that doing so may be critical to achieving positive effects for children.

Notably, the relations tested in this paper are purely associations; they do not reflect the real possibility that different effects may occur from increases in parents' employment than from comparisons between employed and unemployed parents. Because employed and unemployed parents differ in many ways other than employment status, a better way to understand the effects on children of changes in employment at the family or the neighborhood level is to assess the effects in the context of a demonstration project like Jobs-Plus. As part of the demonstration, analyses are planned to examine the program's effects on children in the context of its effects on parents' economic outcomes and the characteristics of the developments.

While parents' employment status had few effects on children, parents' mental health and experience with domestic abuse were associated with negative aspects of children's schooling and behavior. That is, parents at higher risk of clinical depression and those with higher likelihood of domestic abuse were more likely to have children who had problems both in and out of school. Perhaps the effectiveness of the Jobs-Plus program may be enhanced by targeting not only parents' employment and welfare status but also their mental health and abuse experiences. Reducing parents' depression and abuse experiences not only may increase parents' employment but also may have implications for children. Again, because this paper examines associations rather than causal pathways, the findings are only speculative of how changes in maternal depression or substance use might play out for children.

Finally, although it was expected that the contextual factors of a housing development would be related to children's outcomes, this study found few such associations. Although the perceived cohesion and trust in the development was positively associated with children's participation in activities and beneficial schooling outcomes, neighborhood-level employment rates and parents' perceptions of safety and violence in the neighborhood were not associated with measures of children's well-being. These findings are somewhat surprising, but perhaps the strength of associations was limited by the small number of developments on which to base the analyses. Other work, however, across a wider range of neighborhood types, has found

[32]Morris et al., 2001.

neighborhood effects on children's outcomes to be important but smaller than the effects of parental characteristics.[33]

The data reported here provide a first look at the children in the Jobs-Plus demonstration and at how parental and neighborhood characteristics may be associated with children's well-being in public housing developments. Ultimately, the examination of Jobs-Plus's effects on child and adolescent development will be critical to understanding the ways in which neighborhood change — in addition to changes in individual families — may affect children's well-being.

[33]Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, and Aber, 1997.

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An evaluation of Florida's initial time-limited welfare program, which includes services, requirements, and financial work incentives intended to reduce long-term welfare receipt and help welfare recipients find and keep jobs.

The Family Transition Program: Implementation and Three-Year Impacts of Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program. 1999. Dan Bloom, Mary Farrell, James Kemple, Nandita Verma.

The Family Transition Program: Final Report on Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program. 2000. Dan Bloom, James Kemple, Pamela Morris, Susan Scrivener, Nandita Verma, Richard Hendra.

Cross-State Study of Time-Limited Welfare
An examination of the implementation of some of the first state-initiated time-limited welfare programs.

Welfare Time Limits: An Interim Report Card. 1999. Dan Bloom.

Connecticut's Jobs First Program
An evaluation of Connecticut's statewide time-limited welfare program, which includes financial work incentives and requirements to participate in employment-related services aimed at rapid job placement. This study provides some of the earliest information on the effects of time limits in major urban areas.

Connecticut Post-Time Limit Tracking Study: Six-Month Survey Results. 1999. Jo Anna Hunter-Manns, Dan Bloom.
Jobs First: Implementation and Early Impacts of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative. 2000. Dan Bloom, Laura Melton, Charles Michalopoulos, Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.
Connecticut's Jobs First Program: An Analysis of Welfare Leavers. 2000. Laura Melton, Dan Bloom.
Final Report on Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative. 2002. Dan Bloom, Susan Scrivener, Charles Michalopoulos, Pamela Morris, Richard Hendra, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Johanna Walter.

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project
An evaluation of Vermont's statewide welfare reform program, which includes a work requirement after a certain period of welfare receipt, and financial work incentives.

Forty-Two-Month Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project. 1999. Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.
WRP: Key Findings from the Forty-Two-Month Client Survey. 2000. Dan Bloom, Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.
WRP: Final Report on Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project. 2002. Susan Scrivener, Richard Hendra, Cindy Redcross, Dan Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter.

Financial Incentives

Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs. 2000. Gordon Berlin.

Minnesota Family Investment Program
An evaluation of Minnesota's pilot welfare reform initiative, which aims to encourage work, alleviate poverty, and reduce welfare dependence.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. 2000:
Volume 1: Effects on Adults. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox, Lisa Gennetian, Martey Dodoo, Jo Anna Hunter, Cindy Redcross.
Volume 2: Effects on Children. Lisa Gennetian, Cynthia Miller.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, Lisa Gennetian.

Final Report on the Implementation and Impacts of the Minnesota Family Investment Program in Ramsey County. 2000. Patricia Auspos, Cynthia Miller, Jo Anna Hunter.

New Hope Project

A test of a community-based, work-focused antipoverty program and welfare alternative operating in Milwaukee.

New Hope for People with Low Incomes: Two-Year Results of a Program to Reduce Poverty and Reform Welfare. 1999. Johannes Bos, Aletha Huston, Robert Granger, Greg Duncan, Thomas Brock, Vonnie McLoyd.

Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project

A test of the effectiveness of a temporary earnings supplement on the employment and welfare receipt of public assistance recipients. Reports on the Self-Sufficiency Project are available from: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), 275 Slater St., Suite 900, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9, Canada. Tel.: 613-237-4311; Fax: 613-237-5045. In the United States, the reports are also available from MDRC.

Does SSP Plus Increase Employment? The Effect of Adding Services to the Self-Sufficiency Project's Financial Incentives (SRDC). 1999. Gail Quets, Philip Robins, Elsie Pan, Charles Michalopoulos, David Card.

When Financial Work Incentives Pay for Themselves: Early Findings from the Self-Sufficiency Project's Applicant Study (SRDC). 1999. Charles Michalopoulos, Philip Robins, David Card.

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SSP Plus at 36 Months: Effects of Adding Employment Services to Financial Work Incentives (SRDC). 2001. Ying Lei, Charles Michalopoulos.

Making Work Pay: Final Report on the Self-Sufficiency Project for Long-Term Welfare Recipients (SRDC). 2002. Charles Michalopoulos, Doug Tattrie, Cynthia Miller, Philip Robins, Pamela Morris, David Gyarmati, Cindy Redcross, Kelly Foley, Reuben Ford.

Mandatory Welfare Employment Programs

National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies

Conceived and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with support from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), this is the largest-scale evaluation ever conducted of different strategies for moving people from welfare to employment.

Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (HHS/ED). 2000. Gayle Hamilton.

Evaluating Alternative Welfare-to-Work Approaches: Two-Year Impacts for Eleven Programs (HHS/ED). 2000. Stephen Freedman, Daniel Friedlander, Gayle Hamilton, JoAnn Rock, Marisa Mitchell, Jodi Nudelman, Amanda Schweder, Laura Storto.

Impacts on Young Children and Their Families Two Years After Enrollment: Findings from the Child Outcomes Study (HHS/ED). 2000. Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Kristin Moore, Suzanne LeMenestrel.

What Works Best for Whom: Impacts of 20 Welfare-to-Work Programs by Subgroup (HHS/ED). 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Christine Schwartz.

Evaluating Two Approaches to Case Management: Implementation, Participation Patterns, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of the Columbus Welfare-to-Work Program (HHS/ED). 2001. Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.

How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs – Executive Summary (HHS/ED). 2001. Gayle Hamilton, Stephen Freedman, Lisa Gennetian, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Anna Gassman-Pines, Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Surjeet Ahluwalia, Jennifer Brooks.

Moving People from Welfare to Work: Lessons from the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (HHS/ED). 2002. Gayle Hamilton.

Los Angeles's Jobs-First GAIN Program
An evaluation of Los Angeles's refocused GAIN (welfare-to-work) program, which emphasizes rapid employment. This is the first in-depth study of a full-scale "work first" program in one of the nation's largest urban areas.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: First-Year Findings on Participation Patterns and Impacts. 1999. Stephen Freedman, Marisa Mitchell, David Navarro.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: Final Report on a Work First Program in a Major Urban Center. 2000. Stephen Freedman, Jean Knab, Lisa Gennetian, David Navarro.

Teen Parents on Welfare

Teenage Parent Programs: A Synthesis of the Long-Term Effects of the New Chance Demonstration, Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, and the Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD). 1998. Robert Granger, Rachel Cytron.

Ohio's LEAP Program
An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

LEAP: Final Report on Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1997. Johannes Bos, Veronica Fellerath.

New Chance Demonstration
A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

New Chance: Final Report on a Comprehensive Program for Young Mothers in Poverty and Their Children. 1997. Janet Quint, Johannes Bos, Denise Polit.

Parenting Behavior in a Sample of Young Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational Study. 1998. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

Focusing on Fathers

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration
A demonstration for unemployed noncustodial parents (usually fathers) of children on welfare. PFS aims to improve the men's employment and earnings, reduce child poverty by increasing child support payments, and assist the fathers in playing a broader constructive role in their children's lives.

Fathers' Fair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood (Russell Sage Foundation). 1999. Earl Johnson, Ann Levine, Fred Doolittle.

Parenting and Providing: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Paternal Involvement. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cindy Redcross.

Working and Earning: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Low-Income Fathers' Employment. 2000. John M. Martinez, Cynthia Miller.

The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum. 2000. Eileen Hayes, with Kay Sherwood.

The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share. 2001. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox

Career Advancement and Wage Progression

Opening Doors to Earning Credentials
An exploration of strategies for increasing low-wage workers' access to and completion of community college programs.

Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Workers. 2001. Susan Golonka, Lisa Matus-Grossman.

Welfare Reform and Community Colleges: A Policy and Research Context. 2002. Thomas Brock, Lisa Matus-Grossman, Gayle Hamilton.

Opening Doors: Students' Perspectives on Juggling Work, Family, and College. 2002. Lisa Matus-Grossman, Susan Gooden.

Education Reform

Career Academies
The largest and most comprehensive evaluation of a school-to-work initiative, this study examines a promising approach to high school restructuring and the school-to-work transition.

Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships. 1999. James Kemple, Susan Poglinco, Jason Snipes.

Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Engagement and Performance in High School. 2000. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Initial Transitions to Post-Secondary Education and Employment. 2001. James Kemple.

First Things First
This demonstration and research project looks at First Things First, a whole-school reform that combines a variety of best practices aimed at raising achievement and graduation rates in both urban and rural settings.

Scaling Up First Things First: Site Selection and the Planning Year. 2002. Janet Quint.

Closing Achievement Gaps
Conducted for the Council of the Great City Schools, this study identifies districtwide approaches to urban school reform that appear to raise overall student performance while reducing achievement gaps among racial groups.

Foundations for Success: Case Studies of How Urban School Systems Improve Student Achievement. 2002. Jason Snipes, Fred Doolittle, Corinne Herlihy.

Project GRAD
This evaluation examines Project GRAD, an education initiative targeted at urban schools and combining a number of proven or promising reforms.

Building the Foundation for Improved Student Performance: The Pre-Curricular Phase of Project GRAD Newark. 2000. Sandra Ham, Fred Doolittle, Glee Ivory Holton.

Accelerated Schools
This study examines the implementation and impacts on achievement of the Accelerated Schools model, a whole-school reform targeted at at-risk students.

Evaluating the Accelerated Schools Approach: A Look at Early Implementation and Impacts on Student Achievement in Eight Elementary Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom, Sandra Ham, Laura Melton, Julienne O'Brien.

Extended-Service Schools Initiative
Conducted in partnership with Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), this evaluation of after-school programs operated as part of the Extended-Service Schools Initiative examines the programs' implementation, quality, cost, and effects on students.

Multiple Choices After School: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative (P/PV). 2002. Jean Baldwin Grossman, Marilyn Price, Veronica Fellerath, Linda Jucovy, Lauren Kotloff, Rebecca Raley, Karen Walker.

School-to-Work Project
A study of innovative programs that help students make the transition from school to work or careers.

Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work (Jossey-Bass Publishers). 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson.

Home-Grown Progress: The Evolution of Innovative School-to-Work Programs. 1997. Rachel Pedraza, Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp.

Project Transition
A demonstration program that tested a combination of school-based strategies to facilitate students' transition from middle school to high school.

Project Transition: Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed. 1999. Janet Quint, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Pastor, Rachel Cytron.

Equity 2000
Equity 2000 is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the College Board to improve low-income students' access to college. The MDRC paper examines the implementation of Equity 2000 in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Getting to the Right Algebra: The Equity 2000 Initiative in Milwaukee Public Schools. 1999. Sandra Ham, Erica Walker.

Employment and Community Initiatives

Jobs-Plus Initiative
A multisite effort to greatly increase employment among public housing residents.

Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work: Origins and Early Accomplishments of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. James Riccio.

Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site: An Early Look at Program Implementation. 2000. Edited by Susan Philipson Bloom with Susan Blank.

Building New Partnerships for Employment: Collaboration Among Agencies and Public Housing Residents in the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 2001. Linda Kato, James Riccio.

Making Work Pay for Public Housing Residents: Financial-Incentive Designs at Six Jobs-Plus Demonstration Sites. 2002. Cynthia Miller, James Riccio.

The Special Challenges of Offering Employment Programs in Culturally Diverse Communities: The Jobs-Plus Experience in Public Housing Developments. 2002. Linda Kato.

The Employment Experiences of Public Housing Residents: Findings from the Jobs-Plus Baseline Survey. 2002. John Martinez.

Neighborhood Jobs Initiative
An initiative to increase employment in a number of low-income communities.

The Neighborhood Jobs Initiative: An Early Report on the Vision and Challenges of Bringing an Employment Focus to a Community-Building Initiative. 2001. Frieda Molina, Laura Nelson.

Structures of Opportunity: Developing the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative in Fort Worth, Texas. 2002. Tony Proscio.

Connections to Work Project
A study of local efforts to increase competition in the choice of providers of employment services for welfare recipients and other low-income populations. The project also provides assistance to cutting-edge local initiatives aimed at helping such people access and secure jobs.

Designing and Administering a Wage-Paying Community Service Employment Program Under TANF: Some Considerations and Choices. 1999. Kay Sherwood.

San Francisco Works: Toward an Employer-Led Approach to Welfare Reform and Workforce Development. 2000. Steven Bliss.

Canada's Earnings Supplement Project
A test of an innovative financial incentive intended to expedite the reemployment of displaced workers and encourage full-year work by seasonal or part-year workers, thereby also reducing receipt of unemployment insurance.

Testing a Re-Employment Incentive for Displaced Workers: The Earnings Supplement Project. 1999. Howard Bloom, Saul Schwartz, Susanna Lui-Gurr, Suk-Won Lee.

MDRC Working Papers on Research Methodology

A new series of papers that explore alternative methods of examining the implementation and impacts of programs and policies.

Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Estimating Program Impacts on Student Achievement Using "Short" Interrupted Time Series. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Using Cluster Random Assignment to Measure Program Impacts: Statistical Implications for the Evaluation of Education Programs. 1999. Howard Bloom, Johannes Bos, Suk-Won Lee.

The Politics of Random Assignment: Implementing Studies and Impacting Policy. 2000. Judith Gueron.

Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reform on Urban Communities: The Urban Change Project and Methodological Considerations. 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Joannes Bos, Robert Lalonde, Nandita Verma.

Measuring the Impacts of Whole School Reforms: Methodological Lessons from an Evaluation of Accelerated Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom.

A Meta-Analysis of Government Sponsored Training Programs. 2001. David Greenberg, Charles Michalopoulos, Philip Robins.

Modeling the Performance of Welfare-to-Work Programs: The Effects of Program Management and Services, Economic Environment, and Client Characteristics. 2001. Howard Bloom, Carolyn Hill, James Riccio.

A Regression-Based Strategy for Defining Subgroups in a Social Experiment. 2001. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

Explaining Variation in the Effects of Welfare-to-Work Programs. 2001. David Greenberg, Robert Meyer, Charles Michalopoulos, Michael Wiseman.

Extending the Reach of Randomized Social Experiments: New Directions in Evaluations of American Welfare-to-Work and Employment Initiatives. 2001. James Riccio, Howard Bloom.

Can Nonexperimental Comparison Group Methods Match the Findings from a Random Assignment Evaluation of Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs? 2002. Howard Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos, Carolyn Hill, Ying Lei.

Using Instrumental Variables Analysis to Learn More from Social Policy Experiments. 2002. Lisa Gennetian, Johannes Bos, Pamela Morris.

Using Place-Based Random Assignment and Comparative Interrupted Time-Series Analysis to Evaluate the Jobs-Plus Employment Program for Public Housing Residents. 2002. Howard Bloom, James Riccio.

About MDRC

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization. We are dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through our research and the active communication of our findings, we seek to enhance the effectiveness of social policies and programs. MDRC was founded in 1974 and is located in New York City and Oakland, California.

MDRC's current projects focus on welfare and economic security, education, and employment and community initiatives. Complementing our evaluations of a wide range of welfare reforms are new studies of supports for the working poor and emerging analyses of how programs affect children's development and their families' well-being. In the field of education, we are testing reforms aimed at improving the performance of public schools, especially in urban areas. Finally, our community projects are using innovative approaches to increase employment in low-income neighborhoods.

Our projects are a mix of demonstrations — field tests of promising program models — and evaluations of government and community initiatives, and we employ a wide range of methods to determine a program's effects, including large-scale studies, surveys, case studies, and ethnographies of individuals and families. We share the findings and lessons from our work — including best practices for program operators — with a broad audience within the policy and practitioner community, as well as the general public and the media.

Over the past quarter century, MDRC has worked in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada. We conduct our projects in partnership with state and local governments, the federal government, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.

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